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# NGC Certifies Only 1893-CC Morgan Dollar in a GSA Hoard "Hard Pack"

Posted on 1/9/2018

*The extremely rare coin was brought to NGC at the FUN show in Tampa.*

Numismatic Guaranty Corporation (NGC) has graded the only 1893-CC Morgan Dollar known in a GSA Hoard "hard pack." The unique rarity was submitted to NGC at last week's 2018 Florida United Numismatists (FUN) show in Tampa, Florida.

"GSA Hoard" is the name for a cache of several million silver dollars that had been held in the vaults of the US Treasury Department and later sold by the General Services Administration (GSA) from 1972 to 1980. The vast majority of these coins were Morgan Dollars from the Carson City Mint, identified by the "CC" mintmark below the eagle. The most common of these were the 1882-CC, 1883-CC and 1884-CC.



A 1893-CC Morgan Dollar, graded NGC XF 40, in a GSA Hoard 'hard pack'  
*Click images to enlarge.*

Uncirculated silver dollars were sold by the GSA in hard plastic cases termed "hard packs" by collectors, while circulated examples, along with Uncirculated Eisenhower Dollars, were sold in flexible plastic holders called "soft packs" by collectors.

Coins pedigreed to the GSA Hoard are extremely popular among collectors, particularly when the coins are still encapsulated in the original GSA Hoard holders. NGC grades both the hard packs and soft packs while keeping the original holders intact. For hard packs, NGC wraps a distinctive blue band with the coin's description and grade around the holder. Soft packs are encapsulated in a flexible holder along with a label bearing the coin's description and grade.

NGC has graded more than 132,000 Morgan Dollars in GSA Hoard hard packs. None have been dated 1893-CC, making the coin submitted at FUN the sole 1893-CC GSA Hoard hard pack silver dollar ever certified by NGC. (Two 1893-CC silver dollars in soft packs have been certified by NGC.)

NGC had previously graded the only known 1889-CC Morgan Dollar in a GSA hard pack. That extraordinary coin was graded NGC MS 62 DPL. According to GSA records, an 1892-CC dollar was included in the sale, but is believed to no longer be in that holder.

Interestingly, the hard pack 1893-CC was graded XF 40 by NGC. Only Uncirculated Morgan Dollars (those that graded 60 or higher) were supposed to



have been sold by the GSA in hard packs.



The 1893-CC Morgan Dollar in the GSA Hoard "hard pack," graded NGC XF 40  
*Click images to enlarge.*

It is unclear how or why this obviously circulated coin was encapsulated in a hard pack. Perhaps a government worker was tasked with assembling a complete date set and this was the best 1893-CC available. Or maybe this coin was destined for a soft pack but was encapsulated in a hard pack in error.

The existence of this unique hard pack 1893-CC dollar has been known to specialists for several decades. Several of these specialists were contacted by NGC to confirm the authenticity of the holder prior to grading.

Jack Kelly submitted the coin on behalf of the owner, who wishes to remain anonymous. The owner had been given the coin along with a note: "Only 93-CC in a GSA hardpack. This coin should be hand-carried to Mark Salzberg w/ NGC in Florida for certification..." Mark Salzberg is chairman of NGC and a world-renowned coin grader.

Kelly and the owner met with Salzberg at the FUN show. Salzberg immediately recognized the significance of this coin and made arrangements for it to be transferred to NGC's headquarters in nearby Sarasota, Florida, for further study. It was graded and returned to the owner the following day.

"I have had the opportunity to see many GSA Hoard Morgan Dollars, but I had never seen an 1893-CC in a hard pack — or a circulated coin in a hard pack, for that matter," said Salzberg. "To say that this coin is 'one in a million' doesn't quite do it justice."

Kelly added: "NGC was the obvious choice to certify this important coin. NGC's grading of Morgan Dollars is the most accurate, and its blue band for GSA Hoard hard packs provides for superior display."

Allen Roe, a noted GSA specialist, said: "I first saw this 1893-CC at the old Silver Dollar Show in St. Louis in the late 1990s. It's the only 1893-CC hard pack that I have seen or even heard of."

Doug Sharpe, owner of Aspen RCT, Inc., said that he believes this hard pack 1893-CC is unique.

"I first learned of it around 20 years ago and have been following it ever since," Sharpe said. "It is very significant for anyone who wants to build a complete NGC Registry set of GSA Hoard Morgan Dollars. Its value is second only to the hard pack GSA Hoard 1889-CC that NGC graded MS 62 DPL."

Selby Ungar, who is known in the hobby as the "King of Carson City," added: "I've seen the coin before, and it's the only one in a GSA 'hard pack.' I saw it before many years ago, and it's very exciting for GSA collectors to have this coin come to light again. It's great to see it graded by NGC."

The 1893-CC was also submitted with two other Carson City Morgan Dollars in GSA hard packs: an 1879-CC "Capped CC" that graded NGC MS 64+ and an 1879-CC that graded NGC MS 65+. The 1879-CC was a rare date in the GSA Hoard.

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# NGC to Grade Coins On-site in Munich in February

Posted on 1/16/2018

*The event in Munich is a first for the world's largest third-party coin grading service.*

NGC International GmbH (NGC GmbH), the German affiliate of Numismatic Guaranty Corporation® (NGC®), will offer on-site NGC coin grading services for the first time in Munich, Germany, in February. The on-site grading event will be held from **February 27 to March 3, 2018**.

Some of the numismatic world's top authenticators and graders — including NGC Chairman & Finalizer Mark Salzberg and NGC Vice President & Finalizer Ken Krah — will be present for this event. Mark and Ken each have more than 30 years of experience in professional numismatics.

Coins will be accepted by NGC International GmbH (NGC GmbH), a wholly owned subsidiary of Numismatic Guaranty Corporation International, itself a wholly owned subsidiary of NGC. Founded in 1987, NGC is the world's leading and largest third-party coin grading service with nearly 40 million coins certified.

NGC authenticates coins, grades them according to an internationally recognized scale of 1 to 70, and encapsulates them in its proprietary holders designed for security and long-term preservation. Coins certified by NGC are backed by the NGC Guarantee, which provides recourse in the rare event that NGC certifies a not genuine coin or overgrades a coin.

On-site grading in Munich provides European collectors and dealers with significantly faster turnaround times. As an added benefit, no additional fees will be charged for the faster turnaround times.

All vintage and modern coins are eligible for this event. This includes CrossOver



submissions, coins that require Double Thick Holders (up to 9mm in thickness) and coins that require NGC Oversize Holders (up to 101.5mm in diameter and 25mm in thickness). **Note:** Ancient coins and coins requiring NCS conservation cannot be accepted for on-site grading, but they can be shipped to NGC's US headquarters for grading.

**Note:** A new version of the NGC Europe Submission Form **MUST** be completed to submit coins for this on-site grading event. If you do not have a copy of the new form, please contact NGC International GmbH at (+49) 89 255 47 545 or [Europe@NGCcoin.com](mailto:Europe@NGCcoin.com). The form will also be available online at [NGCcoin.de](http://NGCcoin.de) starting February 1, 2018.

**NGC GmbH On-site Grading Fees**

		Maximum (including Value	Fee VAT)
Tier name	Description		
Unlimited Value WalkThrough	All coins	Unlimited	€535
Walkthrough	All coins	€100,000	€295
Express	All coins	€10,000	€80
Standard	All coins	€3,000	€45
Gold	All common date gold coins.	€3,000	€35
Value	All non-gold coins. Maximum value €300. Ancient coins submitted under the Value tier receive a basic description/grade only	€300	€24
Modern	All coins 1955 to present. (no patterns, die trials, etc.)	€2,000	€21
Mixed-Modern Bulk	All coins 1955 to present. (no patterns, die trials, etc.) Coins may be different types. 100-coin minimum	€2,000	€19
Modern Bulk (same type)	All coins 1955 to present. (no patterns, die trials, etc.) Coins must be same type. 100-coin minimum.	€2,000	€17

**To submit coins for NGC on-site grading in Munich:**

- Mail your submission to the Munich office in advance of this event between February 5 and March 2. Be sure to include the new NGC Europe Submission form (in euros), available February 1, 2018, on [NGCcoin.de](http://NGCcoin.de)
- Make an appointment to drop off your submission weekdays at the NGC European Submission Center at Maximiliansplatz, starting on February 5. Submissions must be made on or before March 2.
- Drop off your submission to NGC's location at Booth C1 at the Numismata

Munich **before 12:00 on Saturday, March 3. Submissions for on-site grading may be cut-off earlier, depending on demand.**

NGC has witnessed growing demand for its expert and impartial grading services in Europe in recent years. To meet this demand, NGC will expand and enhance its services in Europe, where it expects to offer on-site grading on a quarterly basis.

For more information, contact:

NGC International GmbH

**Phone:** (+49) 89 255 47 545

**Email:** [Europe@NGCcoin.com](mailto:Europe@NGCcoin.com)

For a list of NGC Europe services and fees, click [here](#). To join as a member and access submission forms, click [here](#)

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United States

# NGC-graded Coin and PMG-graded Notes Top FUN Auctions

Posted on 1/8/2018

*A Stella, certified by NGC, sold for \$750,000, while a gold certificate, certified by PMG, sold for \$600,000.*

A U.S. coin certified by NGC and a U.S. gold certificate certified by PMG – both from the late 19th century – finished at the top of Heritage Auctions' sales at the FUN show last week. A group of four World War I notes from German New Guinea, all certified by PMG, was the top lot in Heritage's world currency auction. These and other highlights follow:

## **Heritage Auctions' FUN US Coins Signature Auction (January 4, 2018)**

- Lot 5009 — [An 1880 Flowing Hair \\$4](#), graded NGC PF 67 Cameo, realized \$750,000. Only about 20 specimens are believed to have survived of this type and date. The short-lived Stellas, which were issued only in proof and only in 1879 and 1880, are among the rarest and most desirable US gold coins.





1880 Flowing Hair \$4, graded NGC PF 67 Cameo. Realized: \$750,000.

*Click images to enlarge. (All images courtesy of Heritage Auctions)*

- Lots 5007 and 5008 – [An 1879 Flowing Hair \\$4](#), graded NGC PF 67 Cameo, realized \$312,000. While not as rare as the 1880 Flowing Hair \$4, this particular specimen was among the finest for its type and date. [Another 1879 Flowing Hair \\$4](#), graded NGC PF 66 ★ Ultra Cameo realized \$240,000 moments later.
- Lot 5097 – [An 1856-O \\$20](#), graded NGC AU 50, realized \$288,000. This is believed to be the rarest gold coin struck at the New Orleans Mint; the NGC Census contains only 11 of these coins.
- Lots 4763 and 4764 – [A 1943 bronze cent graded NGC MS 61 BN](#) and [a 1943-S bronze cent graded NGC AU 53 BN](#) sold for \$180,000 and \$228,000, respectively. Copper was needed for the war effort at the time, and every 1943 cent, except for a few errors, was struck in steel. Those struck in bronze are highly sought by collectors due to their extreme rarity.
- Lots 5188-5197: An Original Panama-Pacific Double Set sold for \$550,021. The 1915 coins, struck to commemorate the opening of the Panama Canal, include a silver half dollar, a gold dollar, a gold quarter eagle, a round gold \$50 and an octagonal gold \$50. The double set allowed both the obverse and reverse to be seen in the display case. Among the 10 coins sold from the double set, [a 1915-S Round Panama-Pacific Gold \\$50](#), graded NGC MS 66, realized \$192,000, while [a 1915-S Octagonal Panama-Pacific Gold \\$50](#), graded NGC MS 65, realized \$138,000. (In a further testament to how special this set is, [the original case](#) sold for \$18,000.)



1915-S Round Panama-Pacific Gold \$50, graded NGC MS 66. Realized: \$192,000.  
[Click images to enlarge.](#)

## Heritage Auctions' FUN Currency Signature Auction (January 5, 2018)

- Lot 22201 – An extremely rare [1882 \\$1,000 Gold Certificate, Fr#1218e](#), graded PMG 30 Very Fine, realized \$600,000. The rare combination of the Rosecrans and Nebeker signatures indicates that this note is from the early 1890s. Only five such examples are known.







1882 \$1,000 Gold Certificate, Fr#1218e, graded PMG 30 Very Fine. Realized: \$600,000.

*Click image to enlarge.*

- Lots 22274 and 22275 – Two 1934 \$10,000 Federal Reserve Notes, Fr. 2231-B – [one graded PMG 64 Choice Uncirculated](#) and [the other graded PMG 63 Choice Uncirculated](#) – realized \$132,000 and \$114,000, respectively. The notes have a colorful history: They were part of a \$1 million display of \$10,000 notes at Binion's Horseshoe casino in Las Vegas.

### **[Heritage Auctions' FUN World Currency Signature Auction \(January 4, 2018\)](#)**

- Lot 28312 – A [group of four rare German New Guinea Notes](#) from the Australian occupation during World War I, offered as a single lot, realized \$168,000. The canceled notes, which have written dates of October 14 or November 5, 1914, are a 5 Marks graded PMG 45 Choice Extremely Fine, a 10 Marks graded PMG 53 About Uncirculated, as well as a 20 Marks and a 50 Marks, both graded PMG 35 Choice Very Fine.

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# Congratulations to the 2017 NGC Registry Award Winners

Posted on 1/5/2018

Each year we've chosen the best sets to win awards in the NGC Registry. These collections demonstrate the participants' passion for the hobby and their resolve to own the greatest.

The NGC Registry is filled with thousands of impressive sets owned by collectors from all over the globe and it is our honor to review those sets year after year.

For 2017 we have expanded the awards to name ten winners each in our Best Classic and Best Modern categories along with five Best Presented Set winners and winners in five Custom Set categories. Additionally we are naming five winners for Achievement in collecting and 3 Collectors Journal authors.

Congratulations to all of our winners. And to all NGC Registry participants, we thank you for sharing your collections with us!



## Overall Achievement

[rudman coleccion](#)

Here is someone who has really embraced the concept of NGC Registry Set competition. With some 3,748 coins entered into 488 sets, the owner has a total point score of more than five million! The average score of these coins is 1,373 points. The range of these sets is extraordinary, with both USA coins and so many vintage and modern world coins that viewing the sets is like a tour through the Krause catalog. This is a truly remarkable achievement by a fanatical coin collector.

### Stiel Coin Collection

A dedicated collector of United States coins, Stiel has assembled 335 competitive sets and 232 custom sets. These includes multiple sets within individual categories reflecting various degrees of completion. It seems no category of USA coins has been overlooked. An average coin score of 3,373 over these many sets has resulted in a total point score of 4,209,733, making this collector the top player within NGC's Registry in the United States field.

### Dan Hughes

This collector is ranked fifth among all NGC Registry participants in point total. Some 380 competitive sets have been listed, comprising a total of 3,328 coins. The central theme of this competitor's collections is modern coins of recent decades from around the world, including the U. S. Mint's Eagle bullion coins. Every one of these pieces is illustrated, providing others the opportunity to embrace the owner's enjoyment. Bravo to Dan Hughes for sharing all this eye candy.

### Kominsky Collection

This competitor in the NGC Registry is ranked 25th overall, a testament to the hard work of this collector in assembling complete sets in uniformly high grades. Joining the Registry just four years ago, Kominsky has come a long way in a short time. The total number of sets is actually modest, focusing on the modern issues of Australia, Canada, China, Mexico, Niue and the United States. Also presented are collections based on the books defining the 100 Greatest U. S. Modern Coins and the Top 50 Most Popular Modern Coins.

### Russ736

This collector is yet another enthusiast of modern coins, favoring some of the same coin series as Kominsky: Australia, China and the USA's American Eagle bullion pieces. By restricting acquisitions to the highest grades available, Russ736 has risen to sixth among world collectors in the NGC Registry. In addition, the many suggestions made by this participant has been instrumental in the expansion of NGC's roster of sets pertaining to China.



## Best Classic Sets

### [KKM — Lincoln Cents — Complete Set of Circulation Strikes](#)

As its title implies, this is an absolutely complete run of all the Lincoln Cents coined for circulation 1909-2017. It's quite a challenge to acquire such a huge number of coins, yet the owner of this set has done so in uniformly high grades for each issue. With the exception of the rare 1922 "No D" entry (NGC certified as MS 64 BN), every coin is a solid gem with full red or red-brown color. Some of the more outstanding pieces include 1909-S (MS 67 RD), 1915-S (MS 66 RD), 1923-S (MS 65 RD), 1926-S (MS 65 RB), 1930-S and 1954(P), both NGC certified as MS 67 RD!

### [evilwoman13 — Pam's Peace](#)

Though comprising just 24 coins, the Peace Dollar series is remarkably difficult to complete in the highest grades. The owner of this set has done just that with a run of coins including seven "Top Pop" specimens. The emphasis has been not solely on grade, but also on eye-appealing, sharply struck, blast white coins. Just a few highlights of this collection include 1922-D (NGC certified MS 67★), 1924(P) (MS 68), 1925-S (MS 65), 1928(P) (MS 66) and 1934-S (MS 66). All of the coins are illustrated and accompanied by the owner's assessment.

### [Gregg Bingham — ★★★★★Bingham's Star★ Coins ★★★★★](#)

Gregg Bingham is a name well known to the hobby and one frequently found among NGC Registry Set winners. Presented here is a complete competitive set of United States silver commemoratives 1892-1954, more than 140 coins in all, and each entry is a superb gem. In keeping with the set's title, many do indeed carry the NGC ★ for superior eye appeal. Among the standout condition rarities are 1893 Isabella (NGC certified MS 67★), 1938-D Arkansas and 1925-S California (both MS 68★) and a very rare Specimen striking of the 1922 Grant with Star (NGC SP 65).

### [Tiger Collection — Traditions Collection](#)

The mint at Dahlonega, Georgia operated only from 1838 through 1861, and its products are among the scarcest of United States coins. This superb collection is complete for all denominations and dates---gold dollars through half eagles. The grades are very high for these issues, with no pieces being less than XF 40. Just a few of the highlights include the 1861-D gold dollar, the 1841-D quarter eagle and 1838-D half eagle (all NGC certified AU 58) and the 1839-D half eagle (MS 62). The superstar of this collection is easily the very rare 1861-D half eagle (NGC graded AU 58).

### [CT's COINS — CT's CC'S \(GSA 1\)](#)

The dispersal of the Treasury Department's hoard of more than three million silver dollars was one of the biggest numismatic events of the 1970s. Since that time, a

vast number of the specially holdered coins have been cracked out, making this complete run of Carson City Mint GSA-sealed dollars a very challenging set to assemble. The owner has provided excellent numismatic information about the sales program and each specimen, and all the coins are illustrated. The most memorable entries are 1879-CC "Capped CC" NGC certified MS 65, 1880-CC Reverse 1879 (MS 67), 1883-CC (MS 67 DPL) and 1885-CC (MS 67+).

#### [\*JAA — JAA USA/Philippines Proof Collection\*](#)

From 1903 through 1945 the United States produced a separate series of coins for use in the Philippine Islands. The superb collection presented here is the Number One ranked set for the proof coins struck 1903-08. A very informative history is provided by the owner, who also describes the significant features of each year's proof coins and illustrates all pieces. Some of the top specimens include the rare 1905 50 centavos (NGC certified PF 67) and low-mintage proofs of 1908: 20 centavos (PF 65) and 50 centavos (PF 66).

#### [\*Zebo — Z — Complete Australian Sovereign Set 1855 - 1932\*](#)

Even after the United Kingdom terminated its gold standard coinage, Australia continued striking these historic pieces for a year or two. This set is mostly complete for all issues struck at the several Aussie mints. An extensive historical essay is provided, and each coin is illustrated. Highlights include the rare early issues, such as 1857 (NGC AU 55), 1864 (AU 58), 1872M with St. George reverse (AU 58) and 1879S St. George (AU 58). An important condition rarity is the 1930M (NGC MS 63, just one finer). This collection represents an outstanding achievement, as the sheer number of coins needed for completion is daunting.

#### [\*Papakushi — 5R N2\*](#)

This collector has taken on the complete series of gold five ruble coins of Nicholas II, the doomed last czar of Russia, a set ranging from 1897 to 1911. All but one of the competitive entries have been added, and their grades are remarkably high throughout this set. There are several pieces that stand out from the others. These include 1900 O3 and 1902 AP (both NGC certified as MS 68) and the rare final issue, 1911 EB (MS 64). It would wonderful to see photos of these coins, too, but the collection is already quite impressive as it stands.

#### [\*BTD St. Louis — Morrison Collection\*](#)

Great Britain did not introduce its own trade dollar until 1895. Given that it then possessed the greatest empire in the world, this was surprisingly late in the game. Nevertheless, production was extensive through 1935, mostly at the Indian mints in Bombay and Calcutta. This collector has nearly completed this long series, which features a wonderful standing figure of Britannia. Among the top entries are 1895 no mintmark (NGC AU 50), 1902C (MS 62), 1908/3B (MS 62), the scarce



1913B (MS 61) and the rare 1934B (MS 62). All the coins are illustrated, and most include useful commentary.

#### [jgenn — Jack's Mexican Charles III Portrait 8 Reales Hoard](#)

Spain's "pillar dollar" was perhaps the most recognizable coin in the world during the 18th Century. This splendid collection brings together all the portrait-and-pillar type eight reales pieces of Spain's Charles III struck at the Mexico City Mint from 1772 to 1789. The owner has provided a well written introduction, and each specimen is accompanied by photos and instructional commentary. Some of the outstanding pieces include 1772Mo MF (NGC AU 50), 1776Mo FM (MS 63), 1780Mo FF (MS 62) and the scarce 1784Mo FF (XF 45).



## Best Modern Sets

#### [rainbowroosie — Rainbowroosie](#)

This collector is just wild about colors. The set presented is complete for all silver Roosevelt Dimes 1946-64, and each one is a gorgeously toned beauty. Most carry the NGC ★ designation for outstanding eye appeal, and many are also certified as Full Torch (FT). Among the top specimens are 1948-S, 1949 and 1950-S (all NGC MS 68★ FT). Others at this superb grade level include 1960 and 1960-D. These are coins of simply amazing beauty, and it's highly recommended that viewers jump straight ahead to the Gallery for this set.

#### [Bruce Laquster — The Renard Collection PF Commemoratives](#)

The U. S. Mint resumed production of commemorative coins in 1982, after a 28-year suspension, and this collection is nearly complete for all the proofs to date. The quality of the coins is beyond improvement, each specimen NGC certified as PF 70 Ultra Cameo. From 2011 onward, almost all are likewise certified as First Releases. Standout entries include the 1983-S Olympics Dollar, the 1984-P and 1984-W Olympics Eagles, the 1987-W Constitution Half Eagle and the 2002-W Olympics Half Eagle. This set is very extensive, and each lovely specimen is illustrated.

#### [Bob Len — Bob's MS Collection](#)

This collector has nearly completed a collection of all the non-proof the Kennedy Half Dollars in extraordinarily high grades, especially considering the great

condition rarity of the early dates. All but two entries are present, and these will be added when the desired quality is found. Each coin is illustrated and accompanied by a brief commentary of provenance and rarity, and all are NGC certified. Some of the most memorable pieces are 1965 and 1966 (both NGC MS 67), and 1967 and 1969-D (both MS67★). Later condition rarities include 1982-P (MS 67), 1984-D (MS 67 PL) and 2003-D (MS 69).

### [Olemartin — \*Young Ideas Complete Ikes\*](#)

The Eisenhower Dollar series of 1971-78 was short-lived, yet it produced a number of interesting varieties, as well as condition rarities. Nearly all of these are present in this impressive MS and PF set, which is missing just two varieties to be complete (it is ranked second for its category). Some of the more memorable coins, all NGC certified, include 1971-D (both regular and Friendly Eagle varieties, MS 67), 1972 Type 1 and Type 3 (both MS 66), 1973-D, 1974-D, 1976-D Type 1 and 1978-D (all MS 67). It is indeed rare to find this coin type in such high grades.

### [Augustus 70 — \*Canadian Masterpiece Set 014\*](#)

The opening line of this collector's set essay says it all: "This is the World's finest collection of Canada Commemorative S\$5 Mint State coins ever assembled, 1973-2016." It is comprised of just over two dozen pieces, and new issues will be added as they are released. The grades of these NGC certified coins are almost consistently MS 69, with a few MS 70 specimens among the later dates. Each is illustrated and features the owner's commentary. Top scoring pieces include the six 2011-13 issues, while most of the coins from 2012 onward also carry the NGC Early Releases label.

### [HergertCollection — \*PQPanda 5oz Medal Set\*](#)

The series of China's silver five-ounce medals began in 1985 and continues to the present day. The owner of this complete set describes how one of the greatest pleasures of collecting these is their extremely low mintages, adding that most seldom trade hands and usually do so privately. All of the entries are NGC certified as either PF 69 Ultra Cameo or PF 70 UC. Each piece is illustrated and accompanied by population data. Highlights include the 1986 ANA 95th Convention issue, the 1987 Hong Kong Expo issue and the 1987 Long Beach issue (all PF 69 UC).

### [Jim Moser — \*The Flock Set\*](#)

The owner of this set has assembled a nearly complete series of Australia's silver one-ounce Kookaburra bullion coins from 1990 to date. These feature both MS and PF examples, all NGC certified, and the grades are consistently high. The artwork of these coins is truly splendid, and the sheer number of entries is amazing. Some of the more noteworthy pieces include the 1992 Eagle (PF 69

Ultra Cameo), the 1995 Panda and 1996 Panda and the 2000 Kalgoorlie (all MS 69). Coins grading MS 70 include the 2001 Vermont, the 2003 Kookaburra and the 2010P colorized Shanghai Expo.

### [Cameonut — CGM III Cameo Shooters](#)

Switzerland recalled its tradition of Shooting Thalers by launching a modern series of Shooting Festival silver 50 Francs pieces in 1984. This outstanding set is complete through 2017, and all the coins are NGC certified. Only the first entry is MS, the remaining pieces being proofs. Top coins include 1984 Oberhasli, 1985 Altdorf (both PF 69 Ultra Cameo), 1988HF Aarau-Brugg, 1989HF Zug-Menzingen and 1998 Schwyz (all PF 70 UC). Each entry is illustrated in excellent photos that reveal the superb design and sculpting of these commemorative coins.

### [MG88 — I kilo panda stud](#)

Among the most popular of modern world coins are the various Panda series coined by China since the 1980s. This absolutely complete set of proofs features the large, one kilo silver issues 1998 to date. Each coin is illustrated, looking quite impressive in its NGC oversize holder. All are certified as PF Ultra Cameo, the majority grading 69 or 70. Highlights include the 1998 200 yuan and 2001 300 yuan (both PF 68 UC), the 1999 200 yuan, the 2000 300 yuan and the 2002 gilt 300 yuan (all PF 69 UC). The top scorer among the PF 70 UC pieces is the 2008 300 yuan. This is a truly beautiful set.

### [KEVYNWEBER — KEVYNWEBER PROOF SILVER R2 SET](#)

One of the most prolific of bullion coin producers is South Africa, which maintains many series in various metals. This collection features the silver two rand pieces coined as proofs since 1992, and it is absolutely complete in consistently high grades. Each coin displays a distinctive design, many pertaining to sports or wildlife themes. Top scoring entries include 1997 Knysna Seahorse, 2000 Octopus, 2002 Southern Wright Whale, 2004 Spotted Owl and 2005 Vultures (all NGC PF 70 Ultra Cameo). The owner has included illustrations of every coin, as well as interesting commentary on the themes depicted.



## Best Presented Sets

[physics—fan3.14 — Prooflike US Type Set](#)

The goal with this collection has been to acquire only NGC designated PL (prooflike) examples for the Basic US Type Set. Though this may prove to be impossible with some of the early issues, the owner has made up in enthusiasm what is lacking in completeness. Following an informative introduction to the set, each entry is beautifully illustrated and described in detail. Among the more remarkable coins include an 1862 silver three-cent piece (NGC MS 67★ PL), an 1867 Rays nickel (MS 65 PL), an 1834 half dollar (MS 63 PL) and an 1885-S half eagle (MS 64 PL).

### [TMS Coins — \*GT. BRITAIN, GOLD HALF-SOVEREIGN 1817-2017 COMPLETE CIRCULATION ISSUES.\*](#)

This impressive collection holds first place in its category and features two centuries of Britain's gold half sovereign coins. Lacking just a few pieces for completion, this is a splendid array of dates, all of them NGC certified. An extremely informative introduction lays out the series in detail, and each entry is presented with photos and commentary. Standout coins include 1821 and 1834 (both MS 64), 1844 (MS 66) and 1893 Veiled Head (MS 65). Among the modern issues is a significant grade rarity, 2012 (MS 69 DPL).

### [Piefort — \*Piefort's Indian Set\*](#)

This collection comprises the 20 Costa Rican coins of various denominations and dates that portray the "Standing Indian" figure of that nation's first republic. Spanning the years 1850-64, these coins are popular with collectors. Each entry is NGC certified, beautifully photographed and is accompanied by the owner's commentary about rarity and provenance. Self-identified as the highlights are the 1851 2-1/2 escudos (MS 65 "the highest grade for any denomination"), the 1855 JB 1/2 escudo (MS 64), the 1850 JB escudo (MS 63) and the 1851 JB escudo (MS 64). Seven pieces are formerly of the famed Stuart Collection.

### [coin928 — \*USPI-One/Date\*](#)

The United States coin series for the Philippine Islands 1903-45 is herein represented by one entry of each denomination and date, all of the coins NGC certified. Rather than including a general introduction, the owner has provided detailed descriptions of each entry, and all the coins are illustrated. Just a few slots are yet lacking, and all of the coins are in desirable grades. Highlights include the very scarce 1918 Large S centavo (AU 58 BN), the very rare 1918-S "Mule" five centavos (F 15), the rare 1906-S peso (XF Details), the 1908 peso (PF 63), and the very scarce 1912-S peso (AU 53).

### [gherrmann44 — \*Gary's Golden Wilhelmina Guldens\*](#)

The owner of this set speaks of admiration for Queen Wilhelmina of The Netherlands (1890-1948), and he has described this collection as "a tribute to



[her] life and her contributions to history." The 11 coins comprise a complete series of the gold 10 guldens pieces of her reign, all NGC certified, and they span the years 1897-1933. After an extensive introduction, each coin is presented with excellent photos and detailed commentary about the coin, its provenance and its place in Dutch history. All of the coins are gems, with the standout specimen being the scarce 1898 issue grading MS 66.

## Custom Sets



### Best Overall Custom Set

[Xan Chamberlain — 1995 Error Coins by Xanno](#)

The description of this set reveals that it's "A collection of error coins from around the world dated 1995 (or could be 1995)." You can't get more specialized than that, and the owner has assembled some 175 pieces illustrating that goal. Most of the examples are USA coins, and they feature a very broad cross section of error types. Each piece is illustrated with excellent photos and comes with brief commentary adding to the information already provided by the NGC certified labels.



### Best World Custom Set

[Forest City — Dineros of Peru and their Antecedents](#)

This is easily among the most educational sets within NGC's Registry. The general introduction is quite long and detailed, while each individual entry is accompanied by its own mini-essay that brings an in-depth understanding of the series. The owner notes that the one dinero piece is the most difficult denomination of its type to collect in Mint State, yet numerous specimens as so graded, and all are accompanied by excellent photos. This set is a remarkable achievement.





## Most Informative Custom Set

[Siah — \*The J. Perry Collection of Colorado Coins and Exonumia\*](#)

The theme with this set is to "give an unprecedented look into the history of my native state and current home, Colorado, through the eyes of numismatics." After a brief introduction to the collection, the owner provides a very detailed review of each of the 100 subject coins, medals and tokens. All of these items are NGC certified, and they provide a rich panorama of Colorado's history. The photographs of each entry are excellent, making for a most entertaining experience.



## Most Creative Custom Set

[Mohawk — \*Avians-The Dinosaurs Among Us\*](#)

This collection takes a detailed look at birds as the only still-existing descendents of the dinosaur age. After impressing the viewer with this concept through an entertaining introduction, the owner presents a rich array of coins from around the world depicting birds. The connection between each bird species and its dinosaur antecedents is re-emphasized in detailed essays accompanying the coins. All of the coins are well illustrated. Though a relatively small set, this one makes quite an impression.



## Best Ancients Custom Set

[Kohaku — \*The Roman Empire\*](#)

The stated goal of this set is to "Discover the Roman Empire through numismatics," and its owner has done a magnificent job of portraying 700 years of history through some 255 pieces ranging from the 2nd Century BC to the 6th Century AD. Every one of these entries is accompanied by excellent photos and detailed commentary on both the coin itself and its subject matter. All are NGC-certified, and the sheer amount of time and work that went into creating this

collection is just staggering.

## Collectors' Journals

The Collectors' Journal awards are our chance to highlight the great entries by our members. This area of the site is all about collectors sharing their passion for the hobby with each other. We're proud to give this award to the collectors who have done an outstanding job of journaling their collecting experience.

[rmw](#)  
[jackson64](#)  
[gherrmann44](#)

## Best in Category

And as always, we celebrate the Best in Category awards for the year.

A full review of the winners, including lists of the Best in Category winners can be found on our [2017 Awards Archive](#) page.

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# The 1901 Pan-American Exposition

Posted on 1/16/2018

*The “Rainbow City” — and the assassination that took place there — inspired new coins and medals.*

By 1900, the United States had established itself as a major world power. The frontier had been settled coast to coast. The major hostilities with Native Americans ended in 1890 at Wounded Knee, and the massive buffalo herds were no more. The US was by far the largest producer of agriculture, oil, and steel. The transcontinental railroad, first established in 1869, now had 193,000 miles of track, with five systems spanning the continent. Henry Ford introduced his gasoline engine in 1892, and the Ford Motor Company would be in operation less than a decade later. By 1900, telephones were in wide use, Edison’s motion pictures were a curiosity, and electric lights were popping up to illuminate cities at night. The world was changing, and it was the perfect time to celebrate American accomplishments and show off the latest innovations and technology of the time.

The Pan-American Exposition was held in Buffalo, NY, for this purpose, as well as to promote trade relations with America’s neighbors. The fair lasted from May 1 to November 2, 1901, and featured everything from a nine-ton elephant to a 389-foot “Electric Tower,” which demonstrated America’s technical superiority and power. Unlike the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, which was nicknamed the “White City,” the Pan-American grounds were nicknamed the “Rainbow City,” as bold colors and intricate color schemes covered the architecture. The buildings on the outskirts of the Expo were painted more pastel colors, and became brighter and bolder as you approached the center.





*Panorama of the Pan-Am  
Click images to enlarge*



A photograph of the Exposition at night. The three most prominent buildings in view are the Temple of Music, The Electrical Tower, and the Ethnology building.  
*Click images to enlarge*

Every building was outlined with incandescent lights, and at night, the city sprang to life when two million light bulbs were simultaneously powered on by Niagara Falls from 25 miles away. There were also midway attractions, sporting events, concerts, and Indian versus cavalry skirmishes re-enacted for spectators three times a day. The Temple of Music could seat 2,200 people and possessed the largest pipe organ ever to have been built to that date. Inventions on display where the newly invented X-ray machine, infant incubators (with live infants), a newly improved phonograph, a typesetting machine, and an electrograph, which transmitted pictures over a wire.





Dignitaries line up to enter the Temple of Music for a ceremonial dedication of the Exposition on May 20, 1901.  
Photo by C.D. Arnold.  
*Click images to enlarge*

Like previous expos, the Buffalo fair offered numerous souvenirs and mementos to the 8 million visitors who traversed the grounds. Most notable among the numismatic items offered was a large (64 mm) award medal, made by the Gorham Manufacturing Company. The medal features a female figure striding alongside a buffalo, with a nameplate for the awardee's name below. The reverse depicts two Native Americans, representing North and South America, sharing a peace pipe. On the edge is stamped, "Gorham Co." The medal was designed by Hermon Atkins MacNeil, who is famous for designing the Standing Liberty quarter. NGC uses the reference Panorama of the Pan-Am, by Frederick Lavin, published in 2010, and the medal is cataloged as TM-103. A remarkably preserved gilt-bronze example of this award medal was recently graded NGC MS 67.





According to Barbara Baxter, author of *The Beaux-Arts Medal in America*, as with the Columbian Expo 8 years earlier, American artists were stimulated to create new, distinctly American designs.

MacNeil himself said of this piece that he aimed "to produce a design that could be mistaken for nothing not American."

*Click images to enlarge*

This medal comes in gold, silver, bronze, and gilt-bronze. Gold examples are extremely rare, with possibly only two in existence. One certified by NGC as Uncirculated Details, Bent, Scratched, realized a whopping \$46,995 in a Rago Auctions sale in February 2017. A silver specimen in NGC MS 63 sold for \$2,820 in a Heritage auction a few months later in June. One year earlier, a bronze example graded NGC MS 62 went for \$1,175.



Another example of MacNeil's medal, but in silver, awarded to Arthur C. Jackson. It graded NGC MS 62. While mintage records are unknown, *The St. Louis Republic* newspaper published a list of awards at the Exposition. There were 887 gold, 1,159 silver, and 1,147 bronze. Most of the "gold" and "silver" medals were actually plating over bronze;

however, there were a small number of solid silver struck, and a few in 24K gold.

*Click images to enlarge*

Before he was eclipsed by the famous Theodore Roosevelt, William McKinley was a popular president. Just two years earlier in 1898, he had guided the US through

the massively successful Spanish-American War. The conflict, which lasted less than 100 days and resulted in a mere 289 American deaths, was labeled “a splendid little war” by Secretary of State John Hay. The victory plunged the United States into world-superpower status, and displayed its naval dominance. Most importantly, the US was able to claim the territories of the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Guam, and annexed the independent nation of Hawaii. McKinley quipped, “We need Hawaii just as much and a good deal more than we did California. It is Manifest Destiny.”

Of the many great attractions at the Pan-American Expo (including the famous Indian chief, Geronimo), the most exciting of all was a two-day visit by President McKinley himself. He delivered a speech to a record attendance of 116,000 people. The following day, on September 6, a meet-and-greet was scheduled at the beautiful Temple of Music. It was here that the president was approached by anarchist Leon Czolgosz, who fired two shots at point-blank range with a pistol concealed in a white handkerchief.



Leon Czolgosz shoots President McKinley with a concealed revolver. This is a wash sketch of the event by T. Dart Walker. Czolgosz was tackled by a tall African man named James “Big Jim” Parker before he could deliver a third shot.

Emergency surgery was conducted by Dr. Matthew D. Mann, an obstetrician and gynecologist, with no experience treating gunshot wounds. He succeeded in removing one bullet that did little harm, but he could not find the other, which was lodged deep in the President’s abdomen. All he could do was sew the wound closed. While a newly-invented X-ray machine was displayed at the Expo, doctors did not use it to search for the bullet for fear of negative side effects. Despite this, McKinley’s condition appeared to improve, with enthusiastic doctors reporting he was alert and even reading the newspaper. However, infection and gangrene set in around the wound, and he took a turn for the worse. He died 8 days after the event on September 14, 1901. The President’s last words were from his favorite hymn, “Nearer, My God to Thee.” After that date, many numismatic souvenirs featuring McKinley’s portrait and the Temple of Music were offered to the public.





This was the official medal of the Exposition, designed by George Thomas Brewster and struck in the Mint Exhibit on the Exposition grounds. It is catalogued in Hibler and Kappen's *So-Called Dollars* reference as HK-289. While this example is brass, the medal was also struck in silver and copper.

[Click images to enlarge](#)



This is an aluminum example of the President McKinley Assassination dollar, featuring a bust of McKinley and the temple of music where he was shot. It is catalogued as HK-290a.

[Click images to enlarge](#)



Elongated cents were also popular souvenirs at the fair. NGC certifies elongated coins listed in Martin and Dow's reference, *Yesterday's Elongateds*. The above specimen, featuring the Temple of Music, is referenced as M&D-13a.

[Click images to enlarge](#)



While America was mourning the loss of its well-loved president, the Exposition was thrown into turmoil. While abnormally cold and rainy weather had kept visitors away during the summer months, the assassination had completely overshadowed the end of the Expo, which had lost its magic. The last day of the fair was declared “Buffalo Day,” and was a last-ditch effort to make the fair a success. The day ended in failure, however, when mobs of people began to destroy the architecture and midway attractions. Windows were smashed, doors were kicked in, and exhibits were destroyed. Cleopatra’s needle was torn to the ground, the National Glass Exhibit was demolished, and lightbulbs were jerked out of their posts and smashed. When it closed to the public, the Expo had seen only 8 million of the projected 22 million visitors.



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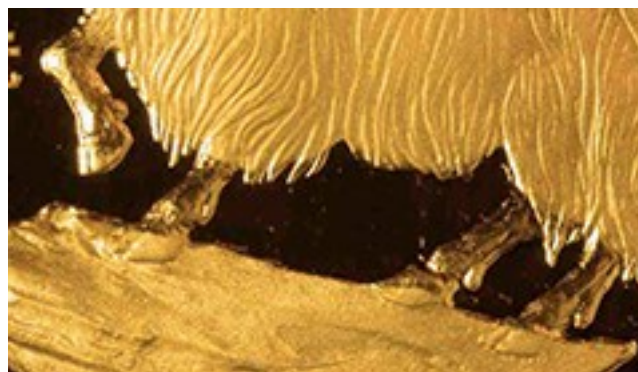
# Modern Chinese Varieties: 1986 Gold 100Y Wild Yak

Posted on 1/16/2018

*This is the 36th installment of our monthly column devoted to modern Chinese varieties.*

This month we will feature the 1986 Gold 100Y Wild Yak. This coin can be found with mirrored and frosted legs.

The first variety (pictured below left) is an example of the mirrored legs (**Photo 1**). A close-up of the area is shown in the photo on the right (**Photo 2**). The bottom image shows the variety with a mirrored horn and mirroring on the lower part of the mountain (**Photo 3**).



**Photo 1** - (left) Example of coin with mirrored legs

**Photo 2** - (right) Close-up of mirrored legs

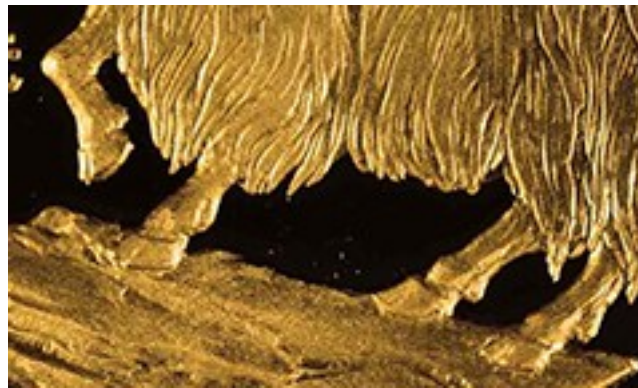
*Click images to enlarge.*





**Photo 3** - Mirrored horn and mirroring on the lower part of the mountain  
*Click image to enlarge.*

The second variety (pictured below left) is an example of the frosted legs (**Photo 4**). A close-up of the area is shown in the photo on the right (**Photo 5**). The bottom image shows the variety with a frosted horn and full frosted mountain (**Photo 6**).



**Photo 4** - (left) Example of coin with frosted legs  
**Photo 5** - (right) Close-up of frosted legs  
*Click images to enlarge.*



**Photo 6** - Frosted horn and frosting on the Lower part of the mountain  
*Click image to enlarge.*

Both of these varieties share the same common obverse featuring the Temple of Heaven and the date 1986 (**Photo 7**).





**Photo 7** - Obverse of a 1986 Gold 100Y Wild Yak coin  
*Click image to enlarge.*

Look for another interesting variety to be featured next month.

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# NGC Registry: 5 New Categories and 42 New Set Types

Posted on 1/16/2018

*Take a look at the new categories and sets recently added to the NGC Registry.*

As 2018 rolls in, things are full steam ahead here at the NGC offices. We are happy to share that we have recently introduced 5 new world categories and another 42 new competitive sets. It is a great time to start planning and collecting for the 2018 annual awards. Check out the new sets, below:



## New categories:

- Anguilla
- Antigua
- Ghana
- Martinique
- Somaliland

## New sets:

- Anguilla: Silver Type Set, 1968-1970, Proof
- Anguilla: Gold Type Set, 1968-1970, Proof
- Antigua: Antigua and Barbuda, Silver and Gold Issues, 1982-Date, Proof
- Australia - Bullion: Kookaburra, Silver One Ounce, 1990-Date, Mint State, One-Per-Date
- Australia - Bullion: Kookaburra, Silver One Ounce, 1990-Date, Mint State, Without Varieties
- Austria: Gold 4 Euro, Vienna Philharmonic, 2014-Date, Mint State
- Canada - Bullion: 25th Anniversary of the Gold Maple Leaf, Bi-Metallic Coinage, 2004, Mint State

- Canada - Commemorative: Silver \$3, Zodiac Series, 2017, Proof
- China - Commemorative: 1989 Save The Children Fund, Mint State and Proof
- [China - Lunar: Gold 1/10 ounce, 1997-2008, Mint State](#)



China 2006 Lunar Gold 50 Yuan

- China - Panda: Panda Medals, 2018, Complete
- Denmark: 10 Ore, 1874-1899, Circulation Issue
- Denmark: Krone, 1875-1898, Circulation Issue
- Denmark: Christian IX Type Set, 1863-1906, Circulation Issue
- Egypt: Murad V, AH1293(1876), Complete Issues
- Egypt: Farouk, 1936-1952, Specimen and Proof, Complete
- Egypt: Fuad I, Gold 500 Piastres, AH1340//1922-AH1351//1932, Proof
- Ghana: Silver 5 Cedis, 2013-Date, Mint State
- Ghana: Gold 2 Pounds, 1960-1977, Proof
- Great Britain - Maundy: 1959 (Elizabeth II) Maundy Set
- Great Britain - Maundy: 1970 (Elizabeth II) Maundy Set
- Great Britain - Maundy: 2010 (Elizabeth II) Maundy Set
- Great Britain - Proof Sets: 2008 Silver Proof Piedfort 4-Coin Set
- Great Britain - Proof Sets: 2010 Silver Proof Set
- India-Princely States: Awadh, Rupee, AH1253/1837-AH1258/1842, Circulation Issue
- Italian States - Naples: 1/2T Type Set, 1832-1854, Circulation Issue
- Italian States - Naples: 2T Type Set, 1825-1859, Circulation Issue
- Italian States - Naples: 20G Type Set, 1818-1859, Circulation Issue
- Italian States - Naples: Silver 120 Grana Type Set, 1817-1859, Circulation Issue
- Martinique: Decimal Coinage, 1897-1922, Mint State
- Martinique: Essais with Piedfort, 1897, Mint State
- Niue: One Dollar, 2011-Date, Proof and Prooflike



- Niue: One Dollar, 1997-Date, Mint State
- [Niue: Silver \\$2, 2018, Proof](#)



Niue 2018 \$2 Silver Proof

- Norway: Silver Krone, Haakon VII, 1905-1917, Circulation Issue
- Norway: Krone, Haakon VII, 1925-1957, Circulation Issue
- Russia: Kopek Type Set, Alexander I, 1804-1830, Circulation Issue
- Russia: 5 Kopeks, Nicholas II, 1911-1917, Circulation Issue
- Somaliland: Silver 1000 Shillings, 2002-Date, Mint State
- South Korea: Silver Official Mint Medals, 2013 - Date, Mint State and Proof
- Sweden: Carolin (10 Francs), 1868-1872, Circulation Issue
- Sweden: Oscar II Type Set, 1872-1907, Circulation Issue

Do you have an NGC-certified coin in your hand and you're not sure where it may fit in the NGC Registry? We are here to help with requests and with any other questions you may have. Feel free to send us an email and let us know how we can help. Reach us easily via email at [registry@NGCcoin.com](mailto:registry@NGCcoin.com).

If you're not familiar with the [NGC Registry](#), take some time to explore it and see the many collecting options that are available. It is completely complimentary. If you have any questions, you may also click below for our help page:

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# NGC Ancients: Roman Provincial Coin Portraits

Posted on 1/16/2018

*Portraits on Roman provincial coins range from crude to skillfully engraved.*

Roman provincial coins—those struck outside of Italy, in the provinces of Rome—are among the most fascinating of all ancient coins. They often have intriguing designs and bear portraits of great interest.

The die engraving on provincial coins varies incredibly, from the cartoonish efforts to artistic masterpieces. In this column we'll illustrate a variety of the portrait styles a collector of Roman provincial coins is likely to encounter.

We'll start with several examples with crude die engraving:



26 mm bronze of Calagurris in Spain

First is this 26 mm bronze of Calagurris in Spain, issued for Rome's first emperor, Augustus (27 B.C.-A.D. 14). Its portrait is especially simplistic.





Sestetius-sized bronze of emperor Tiberius

Perhaps struck at “Paterna” in Zeugitana (a region in North Africa), this sestetius-sized bronze has a rudimentary portrait of the emperor Tiberius (A.D. 14-37).



Bronze of Turiasso with portrait of Tiberius

Also bearing a crude portrait of Tiberius is this bronze of Turiasso in nearby Spain.



24 mm bronze of Edessa, in Mesopotamia, struck for Severus Alexander

Similarly crude is this 24 mm bronze of Edessa, in Mesopotamia, struck for Severus Alexander (A.D. 222-235). The composition of the portrait is interesting,



even if the style of engraving is poor.



Bronze from Antiochia ad Maeandrum in Caria with portrait of emperor Gallienus

This large provincial bronze from Antiochia ad Maeandrum in Caria bears a crude, military portrait of the emperor Gallienus (A.D. 253-268).



Bronze as of Nemausus with portraits of Augustus and Marcus Agrippa

This bronze as of Nemausus, in Gaul, misses the high mark of artistry often achieved at imperial mints in the empire, yet it's nowhere near as crude as the five examples above. The obverse bears the portraits of Augustus and his general Marcus Agrippa.

In some instances it can be reasonably assumed that engravers cut dies for both imperial and provincial coins. Below are two coins issued in Spain during the reign of Augustus which illustrate the point: an imperial-mint denarius (top) and a bronze of the mint of Bilbilis (bottom).





Imperial-mint denarius



Bronze of the mint of Bilbilis

The standards of engraving were often quite good on silver coins issued by the Romans in their provinces. What follows are fifteen especially nice examples.



Drachm of Tiberius

This drachm of Tiberius was issued at the mint of Caesarea in Cappadocia. Its portrait is far better than most which appear on this emperor's imperial-mint denarii.





Drachm bearing portraits of Germanicus and Augustus

Also from Caesarea is this drachm bearing the portraits of Tiberius' nephew Germanicus (died A.D. 19) and Tiberius' predecessor, Augustus (now deified). Augustus' portrait is especially well engraved.



Drachm bearing the portrait of Tiberius and his son Drusus

This drachm from Caesarea bears the portrait of Tiberius and his natural son Drusus, who died of poisoning in A.D. 23. It was struck for the tenth anniversary of the young heir's death.



Cistophori with portrait of Augustus



Among the largest Roman silver coins were cistophori, which were issued at provincial mints in Asia Minor that sometimes also struck Imperial coins. Their portraits often are magnificent, as with the piece, above, depicting Augustus.



Cistophorus with busts of the emperor Claudius and his wife Agrippina Junior

Of equally refined style is this cistophorus with the jugate busts of the emperor Claudius (A.D. 41-54) and his wife (and niece) Agrippina Junior.



Cistophorus issued by Claudius with portrait of young Nero

Agrippina Junior's son, Nero, was adopted by Claudius. A fine-style portrait of young Nero appears on this cistophorus, issued by Claudius in A.D. 50-54, while the young heir held the rank of Caesar. He succeeded Claudius as emperor in 54, and ruled until 68.





Cistophorus with portrait of Hadrian

The coin portraits of Hadrian (A.D. 117-138) often are well-engraved, as on this cistophorus issued for him at Nicomedia, the capitol of Bithynia.



Tetradrachm of Vespasian

Another large-denomination Roman silver coin was the tetradrachm, which was issued at numerous mints throughout the eastern regions of the empire. The piece above was struck at Antioch, in Syria, for Vespasian (A.D. 69 to 79). In this case his portrait is of the very finest style.



Tetradrachm of Laodicea ad Mare with portrait of Caracalla



Also of fine style is this highly ornamented bust of Caracalla (A.D. 198-217), on a tetradrachm struck at the Syrian city of Laodicea ad Mare.



Portrait of Caracalla on tetradrachm of Carrhae

A different style of Caracalla portrait appears on this tetradrachm of Carrhae, in Mesopotamia



Tetradrachm struck at Tyre with portrait of the god Melkart

The city of Tyre, in Phoenicia, had been issuing coins long before the arrival of the Romans. This tetradrachm was struck at Tyre c.A.D. 215-217, during the last two years of Caracalla's reign. The reverse bears the portrait of the god Melkart.





Roman tetradrachms often had unusual portraits, such as the one of Caracalla on an issue of Edessa in Mesopotamia.



Edessa tetradrachm with portrait of Macrinus

Similarly odd is the portrait of Caracalla's successor, Macrinus (A.D. 217-218), on this tetradrachm of Edessa.

Some of Rome's largest issues of imperial silver were struck at imperial mints in the provinces. Just like the cistophori shown earlier, these coins skirt the definitions of imperial and provincial coinage. Below are two examples which have particularly outstanding portraits.



Emperor Vespasian and his sons, Titus and Domitian

The emperor Vespasian and his sons, Titus and Domitian (both then Caesars, though eventually they would reign as emperors), are portrayed on this denarius of the Ephesus mint.





Imperial Mint Denarius of Vespasian

While Titus reigned as Caesar (A.D. 69 to 79), Vespasian struck this denarius on his behalf at the imperial mint in Antioch, Syria.

Our final examples of portraits on provincial coins are from the mint of Alexandria in Egypt. Six pieces are illustrated below.



Copper drachm of Hadrian

This copper drachm of Hadrian was struck in A.D. 133/4. It bears an attractive portrait and its reverse depicts the standing figures of the Dioscuri.



Billon tetradrachm of Hadrian and his wife Sabina



Also from Alexandria is this billon tetradrachm of Hadrian and his wife Sabina, struck in A.D. 132/3. Both portraits are in high relief and are of fine style.



Emperor Marcus Aurelius on Copper Drachm

A stately portrait of the emperor Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 161-180) appears on this copper drachm of A.D. 162/3. The reverse shows the personification of Alexandria crowning the river-god Nilus, who reclines on a crocodile.



Young emperor Severus Alexander and his mother, Julia Mamaea

The young emperor Severus Alexander is portrayed along with his mother, Julia Mamaea, on this billon tetradrachm of A.D. 225/6. The style of the dies are distinct enough that it is generally believed that these dies were engraved at the Rome mint.



Billon tetradrachm of Claudius II Gothicus

As the third century wound down, portraits on Roman coins became increasingly stylized, as exemplified by this billon tetradrachm of Claudius II Gothicus (A.D. 268-270). It bears on its reverse a portrait of the Greco-Egyptian god Hermanubis.



Billon tetradrachm of Harpocrates of Pelusium.

Among the last provincial coins to be produced is this billon tetradrachm of Diocletian (A.D. 284-305), struck at Alexandria in A.D. 291/2. It shows on its reverse the standing figure of Harpocrates of Pelusium. By this time, the imperial portrait is merely a caricature.

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*Images courtesy of Classical Numismatic Group.*

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# Counterfeit Detection: Oregon Trail Commemorative

Posted on 1/16/2018

*A closer look reveals plenty of problems on this coin's surfaces.*

The Oregon Trail commemorative has an iconic design that has made it one of the most popular of all silver commemorative types. The type had an overall mintage of over 200,000 pieces across 14 different date and mintmark combinations. This relatively large overall mintage (for the commemorative series) means that most collectors can acquire a nice example for around \$150.

Most fakes of this type are executed relatively poorly due to the shallowness of some of the design elements, which are hard to replicate. One such counterfeit was recently seen by NGC graders.



Counterfeit 1926 Oregon Trail 50C (left) and genuine (right)  
*Click images to enlarge.*

As you can see from the photos above, the counterfeit (left) has far worse detail than the genuine example on the right. The surfaces are also wrong on the counterfeit, as they appear quite grainy.





Close-up of counterfeit 1926 Oregon Trail 50C (left) and genuine (right)  
*Click images to enlarge.*

A closer inspection shows the vast differences in workmanship between the two pieces. The waves around the coastlines are completely missing on the fake. Additionally, there is an area of raised metal in the field. These blobs of metal would not normally be seen on a genuine example. Also, note how poorly defined the letters of UNITED and OF are. Whereas they are bold on the genuine example, they seem to barely rise from the field on the fake.



Counterfeit 1926 Oregon Trail 50C (left) and genuine (right)  
*Click images to enlarge.*



Close-up of counterfeit 1926 Oregon Trail 50C (left) and genuine (right)  
*Click images to enlarge.*

On the reverse, the counterfeit also lacks the fine detail of the genuine example. This loss of resolution is a direct result of the transfer process that the



counterfeiter used to create their false dies. This transfer process reduces the overall quality of the design and is especially evident on the bull’s head as well as the man. Additionally, the surfaces are very porous, as is the case on the obverse.

Although a lack of fine detail and porous surfaces are very evident on this counterfeit, it clearly fooled at least one collector. In fact, this piece came with four additional counterfeit commemoratives, including a Pilgrim, two Stone Mountains, and a Vermont. All had similar appearance issues. While these low-quality counterfeits would be caught by many collectors, it is always safest to purchase your coins in NGC holders, as they are backed up by the NGC Guarantee of grade and authenticity.

**Did you know?** NGC has created a comprehensive Counterfeit Detection resource to help collectors and dealers identify counterfeit and altered coins. Visit [NGCcoin.com/counterfeit](https://www.ngccoin.com/counterfeit).

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# USA Coin Album: It's the Law! Lesser-known Passages Relating to United States Coinage—Part Four

Posted on 1/16/2018

*The American numismatic landscape underwent significant changes with the Mint Act of 1873.*

The sweeping Mint Act of February 12, 1873 eliminated four United States coin issues by simply omitting them from the stated roster of current coins. Gone were the two-cent piece, the silver three-cent piece, the half dime and the standard silver dollar; added was the trade dollar. This possessed a higher bullion value than its predecessor and would, it was hoped, compete successfully with the Mexican dollars in the Far East trade. The weights of the dime, quarter dollar and half dollar were raised an almost imperceptible amount so that they could be measured in metric figures (Congress was in one of its periodic flirtations with the metric system during the 1870s). Collectors are familiar with the opposed arrowheads added to these coins in 1873-74 to denote that weight change.

This legislation also created the Bureau of the Mint as a division within the US Treasury, and the Director of the Mint and his staff would henceforth be seated in Washington, DC, rather than Philadelphia. The former "branch mints" were now afforded full mint status and equality with the Philadelphia Mint, though all of the creative work and die production remained in that city alone.

Most of the above facts have been well recorded in books about United States coinage, but let's have a look at the more obscure passages. Our gold coins were 90% fine metal, with the balance being an alloy of copper and silver. The existing standard, in place since 1837, stated that up to half of this alloy could be comprised of silver, but depositors of gold ore and foreign gold coins had long

complained that they were not being paid for the value of this residual silver. The new law limited the proportion of silver in alloy to no more than 10%. It also provided for payment of the silver value in deposits, but only when the proportion of silver was sufficient to make its separation affordable to the mint. This same exclusion applied to deposits of silver whenever gold was present as a by-product.

Also revised was the legal tender limit for minor coins. The cent was originally issued with a legal tender limit of 10 cents in any one transaction, but this had been reduced to just four cents by the Act of March 3, 1865, a clear indication that too many were then in circulation. The nickel three-cent and five-cent pieces were issued with legal tender limits of 60 cents and one dollar, respectively, but the Act of February 12, 1873 gave all three coins a uniform limit of 25 cents in any one transaction.

The new law assigned a legal tender limit of five dollars to all United States silver coins, but in so doing extended such status to the trade dollar, a coin not designed for domestic circulation. This

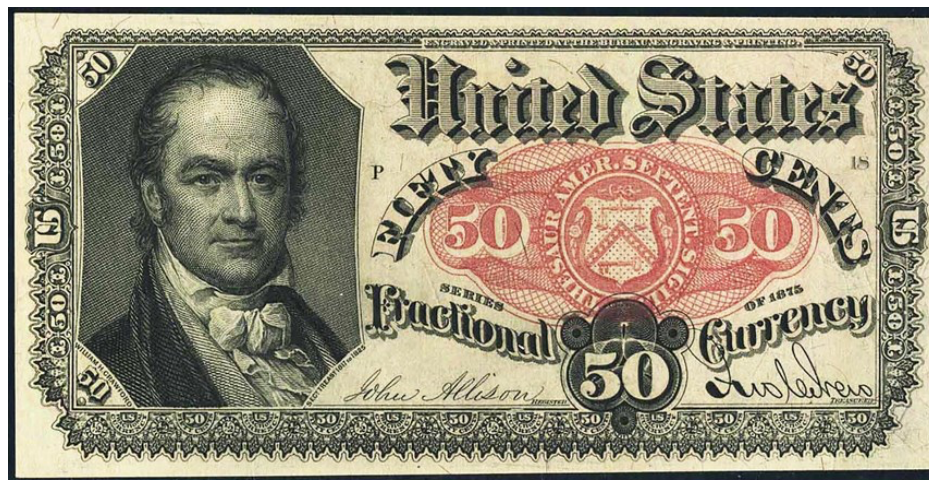


may have been done inadvertently, but the problem it presented did not manifest itself until two or three years later. With the price of silver falling rapidly by the mid-1870s, trade dollars began appearing in American commerce in ever larger numbers. Because they were coined for depositors of silver at their bullion value, which was then below one dollar, this represented an instant profit when the coins were passed to the unwary as silver dollars. Congress acted to end this racket by passing a law July 22, 1876 that, among other provisions, terminated the legal tender value of trade dollars and limited their production to the number required solely for export. Unfortunately, this limitation was easily circumvented by speculators who simply maintained the pretense of overseas distribution while simultaneously passing trade dollars at face value in domestic commerce. The trade dollar crisis and its aftermath has been well reported in numismatic literature, so I won't expand on it here.

More interesting is another provision of the 1876 law. This was actually a follow-up to the Specie Resumption Act of January 14, 1875, which promised the return of gold coin circulation by 1879. It also authorized the Secretary of the Treasury to coin dimes, quarters and halves in numbers sufficient to redeem and retire all of the unpopular fractional paper notes of those denominations then circulating. The



1876 law further authorized the issue of up to ten million dollars worth of fractional silver coins for the purpose of redeeming a like value of legal tender notes (known to numismatists as United States Notes). The notes so removed from circulation were to be re-issued only upon the retirement of an equivalent value in fractional notes, which stubbornly remained at large.



So urgent was the desire to restore silver coins to circulation in place of the fractional notes that this law also permitted additional pieces to be struck beyond the numbers needed to retire



paper currency. Up to 50 millions dollars worth of fractional coins and notes combined was permitted, and this accounts for the huge mintages of dimes, quarters and halves during the years 1875-77. As the price of silver continued to fall, however, the millions of existing coins hoarded or exported after 1861 began returning to domestic commerce, and this brought further production to a grinding halt early in 1878. This suspension has been attributed by most numismatic writers to the onset of heavy silver dollar production that year, but the two events were merely coincidental.

*David W. Lange's column, "USA Coin Album," appears monthly in The Numismatist, the official publication of the [American Numismatic Association](#).*

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# Chinese Coins: The Panda Coin That Nobody Knew

Posted on 1/16/2018

*The 2017 China International Collection Expo Silver Panda coin proves hard to find.*

There are Panda coins that make headlines and Panda coins that don't. For instance, the kickoff for the approaching year's Pandas is always a big deal. Last November, the 2018 Panda Launch was held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel across the street from the Beijing International Coin Expo. To get to the Hyatt from the China National Convention Center, there's no need to walk outside in the cold; a covered bridge connects the two buildings. The Panda Launch ceremony, complete with dance routines, videos and prizes, always draws a crowd and news media.

This year's presentation opened with a dance routine. The performers were not professionals, though, but children around 6-8 years old dressed up in Panda outfits. It looked like a pajama party and was every bit as charming as you might imagine.

Next was a technical presentation by Cheng Chao, the Nanjing Mint artist for the 2017 and 2018 Panda coins. He is the discoverer of a new technique to impress more detail in low relief coins. Mr. Cheng explained the relationship between living pandas and the numismatic artwork we see on the 2018 Panda coins. His words were supported by an exhibit in the rear of the hall. In it was the original clay relief that eventually was turned into the mold for all the 2018 Panda coins.

Speeches, more speakers and an impressive Panda promotional film followed. As always, the event ended with a contest. This one used three electronic slot machine wheels that spun through the WeChat avatars of attending guests. If the wheels stopped on your phone image, you won a silver 2018 Panda coin!

The Chinese media covered the event and millions of people probably saw snippets on the news, or in their newspapers. Few coins benefit from as much promotion as Pandas do.

The 2018 gold and silver Pandas were not, however, the only ones released late last year. From September 8-10, the third China International Collection Expo was held in Nanjing. Its purpose was to “Let Chinese Culture Go Abroad.” Five exhibits there covered: the Chinese Dream; stamps, or philately; design drafts for stamps; an invitational exhibition of Chinese stamp designs; and an art on paper exhibit. During the three-day festival, exhibitors from more than 40 countries exhibited collections of artwork, antiques and stamps to the public.

You might notice that there is no mention of coins in this description.

Nevertheless, China Gold Coin released a special 30 gram 10 Yuan Panda coin to commemorate the event. It features the same design as the standard Pandas for 2017, except the words “China International Collection Expo” are placed in a ring around the Panda design. The maximum mintage is 50,000 coins and it was struck at the Shanghai Mint.



The large mintage figure gave me confidence that I could pick up one of these coins in Beijing. So, one afternoon, I stored a photo of the coin in my phone and headed off to Madian, Beijing’s main coin market. This two-story numismatic center is filled with hundreds of coin, paper money and stamp dealers. I first visited a shop near the entrance that I had bought from previously. Its showcases are filled with an array of modern Chinese coins.



I displayed the photo and asked if they had this coin.

“Yes, yes,” was the answer.

“How much is it?”

“160 RMB.”

Impossible, I thought, as I waited for the dealers to produce one. What they brought me was a regular 2017 silver Panda. I showed them the photo again.

“No, meiyou, we don’t have that.”

It was the same at every store, meiyou, or nothing. One dealer sent a scout all through the coin market to find one. Nobody had ever seen it. Meiyou.

As I left Madian, I called a friend at Lugong, the grand coin market in Shanghai. It took around 30 minutes to check, but then the answer came back, “Meiyou, nobody has this. You can try to order it at a large post office.”

I ended up getting the coin online (graded NGC MS 69) from one of the small band of Chinese medal dealers who deal on eBay. The [NGC Census](#) shows 16 graded. China Gold Coin has it listed on their website, but for a legal tender Panda this is truly the coin that nobody knew.

*Peter Anthony is an expert on Chinese modern coins with a particular focus on Panda coins. He is an analyst for the [NGC Chinese Modern Coin Price Guide](#) as well as a consultant on Chinese modern coins.*

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# NCS January Highlights

Posted on 1/16/2018

*Take a look at some recent highlights of coins conserved by NCS.*

Numismatic Conservation Services (NCS) uses a variety of proprietary techniques to remove harmful surface contaminants, stabilize and protect a coin's surfaces and, in many cases, improve a coin's eye appeal. After coins are conserved by NCS, they are seamlessly transferred to Numismatic Guaranty Corporation (NGC), an independent affiliate of NCS, for grading and encapsulation.

Below are a few highlights of coins that were conserved by NCS and graded by NGC recently.

This 1868 Nickel 5 Cent Pattern Judd-633 featuring a design akin to the 3 Cent Nickel was submitted for NCS conservation with serious hazy residue hiding the original surfaces. Residues can be both unattractive and potentially damaging to the surface underneath. Following careful conservation work, this great pattern coin was able to grade numerically with NGC.



1868 Nickel 5 Cent Pattern Judd-633

Before conservation

*Click images to enlarge.*



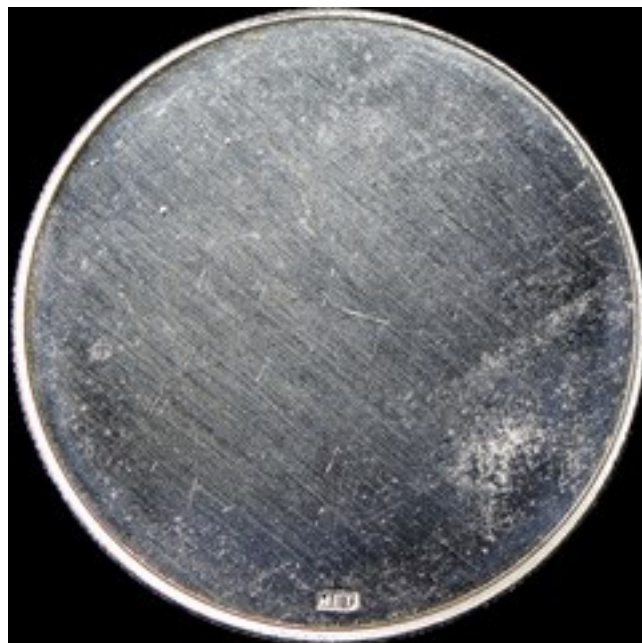


1868 Nickel 5 Cent Pattern Judd-633  
After conservation  
*Click images to enlarge.*

This South Korea KE4303/1970 reverse die trial for a commemorative 250 Won featuring Park Chung Hee came to NCS for the removal of oily appearing residues on both sides. Removal of heavy residues like this requires careful work to not damage the surface underneath. After successful residue removal, this coin was able to grade very well with NGC.



South Korea KE4303/1970  
Before conservation  
*Click images to enlarge.*





This Great Britain 1799 ½ Penny proof strike in gilt came to NCS in need of help to remove the thick layer of green and white residue obscuring the original surface in a spotty pattern. Many decades of improper storage likely allowed the residue to develop: a problem that frequently plagues many classic proof coins. Careful conservation work was able to remove the thick layers of residue and leave a coin with brilliant surfaces to grade with NGC. (Due to the scratches present on the obverse from prior to conservation, this coin received an NGC Details grade.)



Great Britain 1799 ½ Penny Proof Strike  
Before conservation  
*Click images to enlarge.*



Great Britain 1799 ½ Penny Proof Strike  
After conservation  
*Click images to enlarge.*

For more information about NCS, visit [www.NGCcoin.com/NCS](http://www.NGCcoin.com/NCS).

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# From the NGC Archives: 1831 Capped Bust Half Dime

Posted on 1/16/2018

*The silver five-cent piece, or half dime, was the first issue of the infant United States Mint in 1792.*

This denomination was coined sporadically through 1805, when its production ceased due to a lack of demand from depositors of silver bullion. After a lapse of nearly a quarter century, the minting of half dimes resumed in 1829 by the order of Mint Director Samuel Moore. A familiar and useful coin in the 1830s, half dimes circulated interchangeably with the half real pieces of Mexico and other Latin American countries.



*Click images to enlarge.*

This gem specimen was formerly a part of the famed Louis Eliasberg Collection. Auctioned by Bowers & Merena, their cataloger described it as "Silvery white with iridescent amber and bluish green. Fully prooflike and very pretty."

Are you interested in learning more about these coins? Click [here](#) to visit the NGC Coin Explorer and read on.

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